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## *Hill Panel Votes Bill to Restrict Information Act*

Associated Press

A Senate Judiciary subcommittee yesterday approved changes in the Freedom of Information Act to make it easier for the Central Intelligence Agency or Defense Department to keep some information secret on national security grounds.

The subcommittee headed by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) voted 3 to 1 for a series of changes to the 15-year-old law, which has been criticized as burdensome and expensive by various governmental agencies.

The amendments approved yesterday would let a government agency reject a request that it decides might disclose the identity of a confidential source or information provided by the source.

Information that might "endanger the life or physical safety of any natural person" could be kept secret.

Government officials could keep secret any information on investigations of terrorism or organized crime.

In addition, the government could charge fees to businesses and people who seek information for commercial purposes. Agencies would drop the fees for information intended for public use.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), who voted against the amendments, said the fees themselves will "become an obstacle to obtaining information."

The changes would ease time requirements for responding to FOIA requests and limit access to some information on out-of-court settlements between government lawyers and private business.

Under the subcommittee proposal, a judge would have to find that a decision to keep information secret was "arbitrary and capricious."